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113, 197, 564, 582, 614

[For information pertaining to language regions, kinship terminology and kin relationships, see 5: Karve AW1 India, category 116, pp. 230-1.]

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[For information on the castes of the Telugu country see 33: Bhattacharya, AW1 India, category 116, pp. 98-101, 126, 221-222 and 286.]

munities from different parts of the country covering the many divergent patterns of organization and ethos. Until this is done our picture of social systems in rural India will remain vague and inadequate.

From the old ethnographic surveys and some preliminary studies published recently, an outline of the structure and organization of Indian villages is beginning to emerge clearly. Notwithstanding many significant differences, they have a number of structural similarities. In the north, middle and peninsular India, as well as in the eastern and western parts of the country, the following features characterize a very large number of villages.

1. As a territorial, as well as social, economic and ritual unit, the village is a separate and distinct entity. The residents of this settlement recognize their corporate identity, and it is recognized as such by others. It is not uncommon to find in them a sentiment of attachment towards their own settlement site. In several matters the village acts as a unit.

2. These settlements have a composite population comprising a number of groups belonging to different Hindu castes, and in some cases to tribes as well as to other religious groups. As far as the Hindu section of the population goes, these diverse groups are inter-dependent and integrated in the social, economic, ritual and administrative organization of the community. No caste alone is self-sufficient, for it requires the services of several other occupational castes which hold the monopoly of certain crafts and professions. This system of co-operative labour, based on a pattern of inter-caste relations approved by tradition, is not confined only to economic activities but also extends to ceremonial and ritual life. The hierarchical organization of castes within the community is so fixed in the structural patterns of rural India that the tribal as well as the non-Hindu (such as Muslim and Christian) segments of the population come to be regarded as other castes in the village.

In many parts of India, while maintaining their socio-religious identity, several of these non-Hindu groups have acquired some caste characteristics, particularly occupational specialization. For example, in some areas of rural India the Muslims function as an occupational caste variously, making fireworks, weaving, driving *tongas*, *ikkahs* and other hackney-carriages, selling vegetables or playing musical instruments.

3. The members of this local group are bound together by ties

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2. THE PEOPLE

According to the census of 1951, the total population of Shamirpet, which included the two neighbouring hamlets of Babuguda and Upparpalli, was 2,494, with a total of 508 houses. The following table shows the distribution of the population according to religion:

1. Hindus.	A. Clean castes	1,434
	B. Untouchables or Scheduled castes .	680
2. Muslims		340

The predominant language in Shamirpet is Telugu, the main language of Telangana and Andhra-desa. It is known as 'the Italian of the East' and is praised for its sonorous and lyrical qualities and possesses a vast literature, both classical and modern. However, the dialect of Telugu, which is spoken in Shamirpet, and generally in the countryside, is criticized by the more sophisticated Andhras for its harshness and rustic accent. In the census of 1951, 2,008 persons in this village were recorded as speaking Telugu, while 340 persons were recorded as speaking Urdu, which was until 1948 the official language of Hyderabad administration. These figures are, however, misleading, and make reference only to the mother-tongue. In practice most men in the village are bi-lingual; those whose mother-tongue is Telugu have at least a smattering of Urdu, and of the 340 Urdu speakers at least half possess a working knowledge of Telugu. As a generalization it may be stated that knowledge of the mother-tongue alone is confined only to women, although several women among both the Hindus and the Muslims are also bi-lingual.

Thus the two major divisions in the population of the village may be distinguished on the grounds of religion and language. Culturally also the Hindus and Muslims stand in marked contrast to each other.

The Hindus of Shamirpet can be classed under three broad divisions:

1. Cultivators.
2. Occupational castes, with traditional crafts and professions regarded as clean and respectable.
3. Depressed classes, subsisting by humble and lowly callings.

In the first group we can place the following castes: the Reddi, the Muttarasi, and their subdivisions. These groups are often

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463 564 referred to as 'the Kapu' or agricultural castes. As this name suggests, they derive the major part of their subsistence by tilling the land, although individuals from any of these groups may engage in trade and commerce or may take up urban occupations.

In the second group we can place the following: the Brahmin (priests), the Komti (traders), the Kummari (potters) and the Golla (shepherds). The five sections of the Panch Bramha group of artisan castes, that is, the Wadla (carpenters), the Kammari (blacksmiths), the Ausula (goldsmiths), the Kase (workers in bell-metal) and the Kanchari (sculptors), also belong to this group —although they claim separate identity and are rather exclusive. The Sale (weavers), the Gaondha (toddy-tappers), the Sakali (washermen) and the Mangali (barbers) also follow their traditional occupations; and although in the hierarchy of caste organization their place is a little inferior to the castes mentioned above, they belong to the second group for the purpose of our classification. The position of the once-tribal but now largely assimilated Vaddar (stone-breakers) and the Erkala (hunters and basket-makers) is slightly different, for although they are not untouchables their position among the clean castes is the lowest.

564 783 [641] There are only two untouchable or depressed castes in Shamirpet, the Mala and the Madiga. Of these two, the Malas consider themselves superior to the Madigas, by whose touch they are polluted. However, it should be pointed out that the Indian constitution has abolished untouchability. The untouchable castes can draw water from the public wells and can without discrimination share the public utilities with the clean castes. Their children now freely attend the common village school. But social conservatism dies hard and legislation alone cannot overnight change the deep-rooted complexes of thought and behaviour which are the heritage of many generations of a caste-ridden social system.

582 Caste still retains its endogamous character, and traditional rules prohibit inter-dining with persons of lower castes. Thus in these two spheres at least the untouchable castes have still to confine themselves to their narrow circles. While in the cities the clean castes are no longer sensitive to the touch of a person belonging to these castes, in the countryside an untouchable still cannot approach too close to clean-caste people lest they be polluted by a chance physical contact. Some progressive-minded untouchables

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resent this disability, but nevertheless they recognize the value of realizing their own limitations and continue to conform to the traditional norms of behaviour.

The people of Telangana and Andhra-desa belong to the great family of Dravidian-speaking people who developed a great civilization in the south and have materially contributed to the final make-up of Indian civilization as we know it to-day. Racially they represent a mixture of several elements. In physical types also the people of Shamirpet show great variation. Most of the Muslim inhabitants of Shamirpet are the descendants of local converts and do not therefore greatly differ in physical characteristics from the local Hindu inhabitants, but the few immigrants whose arrival dates from recent times present a marked contrast with their more delicate features and fairer skin colour.

In point of dress and ornament the Hindus and Muslims differ widely. Muslim men and boys wear loose trousers of thin white cloth called *pyjama*, and a vest or a shirt. Out of doors they put on the more conventional long coat buttoned up to the neck known as *sherwani*. They invariably wear a red fez cap or a black cap made of sheepskin. Muslim girls wear a tight *pyjama* and a long, loose tunic which often touches the knees. Round the shoulders and thrown round the back they wear a thin white or coloured scarf known as *dupatta* or *odhni*. On festive occasions these clothes are very colourful. Married Muslim women usually wear a blouse or bodice, and a *sari*—a wide piece of cloth, some five or six yards long, which is tied round the waist to form a skirt that nearly touches the ankles. It is tied in such a way that one end of the cloth is taken over the chest to one shoulder and then passed behind the neck to the other shoulder. Married Muslim women are obliged by the rules of their religion to observe *purdah*, i.e. veil themselves in the presence of all but their closest relations. Whenever they leave their houses they wear this veil known as *burkha*, a garment which falls from the crown of the head to the ground. The Hindu mode of dress is quite different, and varies greatly according to the financial status of the different families. Among the poorer classes, infants remain naked, but occasionally a few rags are tied round their waists; and in childhood they go about in these tattered rags. Boys wear a vest or shirt and a *dhoti*. Girls wear a skirt (*lahanga*) and a blouse. Among the poorer classes these clothes are almost always dirty, for within a few days of their

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built the residential houses of the people belonging to the clean castes or to the Muslim community. The house of the Deshmukh, or the village headman, is the very first house and stands a little to the right of the unmetalled road that joins the main road to the village. It has a very high compound wall made of locally available stone and looks more like a small fort than a dwelling-house. In the main section of the village that sprawls to both sides of the main road it is difficult to discern any clear and systematic caste 'quarters' in which only members of one caste live. There is an unmistakable tendency among some castes, as for instance the Sakali (washermen), the Vaddar (stone-workers), the Golla (shepherds) and the Kummari (potters), to occupy houses in compact blocks on contiguous patches of land, but in close proximity are situated the houses of people belonging to other communities. In no sense can the individual clean castes be said to live in separate colonies, nor is any one caste in exclusive possession of any clearly marked out area. In many cases people live outside their own caste 'blocks'. The houses of the clean castes are built so close together that it is clear that considerations of caste distinction do not materially affect their choice of sites for the construction of houses. A Hindu may live in the immediate neighbourhood of Muslims, and often people belonging to quite different castes are one another's neighbours. It is probable that in the beginning the different castes marked out different blocks for themselves on the proposed site for the settlement. People coming later to the village either found a place to construct their houses in their caste block or had to choose a plot elsewhere. However, there are some communities which live in separate colonies or *wada*. To the east, a narrow strip of land separates the main settlement from the *Mala-wada*, or the colony of the Mala untouchables. Further east, and separated from the houses of the Malas by another narrow strip of land, is the colony of the Madigas. Distinct from both these groups, and situated to the north-east of the main village, there is a small colony of Erkala hunters, whose small circular huts stand out in marked contrast to the houses in the rest of the village.

It has already been pointed out that there is a school, a dispensary, a post office and a police station in the village. The school is at present ill-housed; it has five classes meeting in two small rooms and only two masters, who teach both Urdu and Telugu as well as the other subjects of the primary school curriculum.

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621 in fact entered as parts of the village of Shamirpet in government records, and in a sense they are; nevertheless, on a restricted scale
623 they enjoy considerable autonomy. The elders of the hamlets try, as far as possible, to decide the hamlet's minor disputes without referring them either to the headman or to the village council of Shamirpet. They say, 'We are poor inhabitants of a small hamlet. Our resources are limited. The people of Shamirpet are prosperous; they have adopted the ways of the city. If we refer our cases to them, they will impose such fines that our necks will break.' Yet there are many cases in which one of the disputing parties, dissatisfied with the judgement of the elders and possessing the necessary financial resources or influential support, will refer the case to the Shamirpet village council. In all such cases one or two elders and influential people from the hamlet in question are summoned to attend the proceedings of the village council at Shamirpet. Similarly, for all the ceremonies organized jointly by the people of Shamirpet as a whole it is customary to send invitations to Babugura and Upparpalli and it is expected that they will be represented by at least some of the village elders.
[631] When the people of the village as a whole are summoned on government business to the district or subdivisional headquarters, the residents of the two hamlets have also to accompany the people
621 of Shamirpet, for all the three settlements are, according to government records, component units of one village. However, the distance between Shamirpet and the two hamlets is an effective barrier to the pursuance of a common social life. And from this point of view the two hamlets are as independent as two self-contained small villages.

361 The area surrounding Shamirpet is quite densely populated. It
574 is not unusual to find a village or a small hamlet every three to six miles, and Shamirpet is surrounded by a number of villages, some large and others small. With most of these, Shamirpet, as a village, has very little to do. However, individual residents remain in constant touch with friends and relations in the surrounding villages. Ceremonies connected with the major crises of life, i.e. birth, marriage and death, often take people out of Shamirpet to the neighbouring villages, or bring people from there
564 into Shamirpet. For a more or less well-defined block of villages the different castes have their respective caste councils, to which matters concerning the caste only are taken.

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CHAPTER TWO

Social Structure

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To understand the social structure of an Indian village it is necessary to examine the various units through which the village community is organized. The basic and primary unit of the society is the elementary or joint family. Every family belongs to an exogamous division of a caste and several such divisions constitute an endogamous caste or an endogamous section of a large caste. Only excommunication or a change of religion can alter the position of the individual in any such social units. On the other hand, every family belongs to the community with whom it shares a settlement site, be it a village or a hamlet attached to a village. In socio-religious affairs, control of the individual is threefold—that of his family, his village and his caste. Often it is only the independent, endogamous division of the caste which takes cognizance of offences and penalizes erring members, and not the caste as a whole. On the other hand, very serious cases or matters concerning more than one village may be heard and decided by a larger judicial organ, comprising members of all the constituent villages. The structure and organization of the family, as well as the criterion of status differentiation in the community, can best be described in a separate chapter; here we shall examine the division of the community into castes, and follow it up by an analysis of the internal organization of the village with special reference to authority and the machinery regulating the administration of justice in the village.

1. CASTE IN THE VILLAGE COMMUNITY

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The Hindus and the Muslims constitute two distinct sections in the population of Shamirpet. Although long residence and close

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association have brought them in close contact with each other and their cultures are in certain fields inter-related, the two communities retain their own socio-religious identities. The Muslims are in a minority in the population of the village; but they are a close-knit group in socio-religious matters. All Muslims belong to the Sunni division. Among them there are no great inequalities of wealth and possession, and consequently there is, within the Muslim community, no evidence of class distinction. In matters affecting their socio-religious life they act as a separate and self-sufficient group, rarely seeking the help, assistance or advice of their Hindu neighbours. One of the remarkable characteristics of the predominantly Hindu rural society of India is that non-Hindu communities have also been influenced by the caste-hierarchy of Hinduism. Even the non-Hindu groups have had to fit somehow into the rigid framework of the caste-dominated social system; and while they have always remained outside it, never having been regarded as Hindus, they have nevertheless acquired a quasi-caste status in accordance with their general social, economic and political position. As Hyderabad was formerly ruled by a Muslim, his co-religionists had a privileged position in the affairs of the State. Their social status in the rural areas has always been more or less equal to that of the agricultural castes; although from the point of view of religion the Hindus have always regarded them as inferior. Nevertheless, a clean-caste Hindu can sit down with a Muslim, and the less orthodox can even touch them without having to take a subsequent purificatory bath.

The Hindu social system, founded on the division of society into 'castes', presents a social framework of great complexity. The traditional *varna* system, modified in the course of the evolution of Indian social polity, divides Hindu society into five major groups. The first three of these, viz. Brahmins (priests and men of learning), Kshatriyas (rulers and warriors) and Vaishyas (traders) are regarded as *dvija* or 'twice born'. According to Hindu ritual only they are allowed to undergo the *upanayana* ceremony which symbolizes their spiritual re-birth and entitles them to wear the sacred thread. The fourth group is composed of numerous occupational castes who are relatively clean and are not classed as untouchables. Finally, in the fifth major group we can place all the untouchable castes. This classification is accepted by the Hindus all over India. The relative positions of the different groups,

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564 ascribing order of precedence and social superiority or inferiority, are recognized everywhere. The legitimate occupations to be followed by people in these major groups (*varnas*) are defined by tradition. Within each group there are several sub-groups (*jati* or castes), which can again be arranged in a hierarchical order within themselves. Inter-relations, between both major groups and their sub-groups, are largely governed by traditional rules, and all major forms of contact, viz. touch, inter-dining and sexual intercourse, come under the purview of these elaborate rules.

Within this general frame of the *varna* system, in the different regions and territorial units of the land, there are several socially autonomous castes, each fitting into one of the five major divisions but otherwise practically independent in socio-religious spheres of life. These castes often share a common generic name and title with castes of comparable status in other regions; but often they do not inter-dine, whilst inter-marriage between them is prohibited. Each caste is further subdivided into several sub-castes which are endogamous and are for all practical purposes independent groups by themselves.

The organization of the Hindu castes and their relative positions in the traditional caste-hierarchy require a detailed and careful examination. From the point of view of caste superiority the different castes in Shamirpet may be grouped in the following order:

'TWICE-BORN' CASTES

Brahmin (Priests)

Komti
(Traders)

OCCUPATIONAL CASTES

Agriculturists, Workers and Labourers

Kapu—Reddi
(Agriculturists)

Kummari
(Potters)

Golla
(Shepherds)

Kapu—Mutarasi
(Agriculturists)

Sale
(Weavers)

Gaondla
(Toddy-tappers)

Sakali
(Washermen)

Mangali
(Barbers)

Vaddar
(Stone-workers)

Erkala
(Hunters and Mat-makers)

Pichha-Kuntla
(Minstrels narrating caste and clan legends)

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SOCIAL STRUCTURE

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UNTOUCHABLE CASTES

Mala
(An untouchable caste)

Madiga
(An untouchable caste)

The above table does not include the Panch Bramha group. In point of religion they are Hindus, but their position in the caste hierarchy is rather uncertain. This group comprises five divisions: The Wadla (carpenter), the Kammari (blacksmith), the Ausula (goldsmith), the Kase (carver of figures in wood and stone) and the Kanchari (worker in bell-metal). Of these only the first three sections are found in Shamirpet. Inter-dining and inter-marrying, these sections constitute a distinct group of their own. In the local caste hierarchy they should be placed below the Kapu-Kummari-Golla group, but it cannot be said that they rank equal to or below the Sale-Gaondla group.

Among Hindus the Brahmin holds the highest place. He officiates at the ceremonies of all castes, except those of the Vaddar, the Erkala, the Pichha-Kuntla, the Mala and the Madiga. However, he is consulted by these castes also regarding the auspicious timing of agricultural operations or to perform marriage ceremonies; and his astrological calculations are eagerly sought by all people. All castes, except the Panch Bramha group, will accept food at his hands, but being 'pure and high-born' he cannot accept food from the hands of any but his caste fellows.

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The Komtis rank next to the Brahmins. They are mostly traders and money-lenders, keeping small shops where they sell grain and general provisions. All castes except the Brahmin and the Panch Bramha group accept food at their hands, but they do not take food from those castes whose social position is lower than their own, and thus can only accept food at the hands of the Brahmins.

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The Reddi sections of the Kapu (agricultural) group, the Kummari and the Golla castes are of equal caste status. Although each is an endogamous caste, they will freely inter-dine with each other, and social contact between them is on a basis of equality. The position of the other Kapu section, viz. Muttarasi, is a little lower. The first Kapu section as well as the Golla will eat at their hands, but the Kummari will refuse food which they have touched.

On the next level are the Sale and the Gaondla, who enjoy a

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564 more or less similar position but are both endogamous and do not
264 inter-dine. They accept food at the hands of the castes higher than
582 themselves but not from those which are lower. Similarly, the Sakali and the Mangali have a similar caste status, but they do not inter-marry or inter-dine. But again, both the Sakali and the Mangali will dine with the Sale and the Gaondla and all the other castes higher than themselves. The Vaddar and the Pichha-Kuntla will eat with neither the Sakali and the Mangali nor with the untouchable Malas and Madigas, but they can take food at the hands of all castes higher than themselves. The Erkalas will eat from the hands of all castes except those of the Mala and the Madiga. The Sakali and the Mangali do not accept food from the Erkala. The Erkala and the Pichha-Kuntla will accept food from the Vaddar, but the Vaddar will not accept food from the Erkala and the Pichha-Kuntla. Finally, the Mala and the Madiga will eat at the hands of all the higher castes, but the Mala, considering himself superior of the two untouchable castes, will refuse food touched by a Madiga.

The position of the Panch Bramha group is peculiar. They constitute a consolidated and self-sufficient group. They do not accept food at the hands of any other castes, nor do any other castes accept food touched by them. Here the position differs vitally from that found in north India, where the carpenter, the blacksmith, the worker in bell-metal, the goldsmith and the carver of images constitute different endogamous castes which do not, as they do in this area, inter-marry and inter-dine. Their social status is neither very high nor very low. Everywhere they rank lower than the 'twice-born' *varnas* of Brahmins, Kshatriyas and Vaishyas, but they are not regarded as impure and their status is infinitely superior to that of the untouchables. In the area under study while the Panch Bramha group is regarded as 'clean', even the untouchable Mala would refuse food touched by them, and it is only in recent years that the Madigas have started to eat from their hands. 'Their very touch poisons the food. How can we accept it?' the people are often heard to remark when they are asked to explain their refusal of food touched by any of the Panch
[881] Bramha castes. The Panch Bramha castes wear the sacred thread
564 of the twice born and refuse food even from the Brahmin. It is probable that their social exclusiveness reflects an attitude which was developed in ancient times when a great fusion of Aryan and

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non-Aryan groups was taking place in Indian society and Hinduism was consolidating itself. The highly organized craftsmen's guilds of those days may perhaps have succeeded in maintaining their integrity and exclusiveness for a long time, but had ultimately to yield; yet the tension created by their resistance remained, and even when they were absorbed into the fold of Hindu society they were not admitted as equals to the groups of comparable social status and in consequence probably continued to maintain their age-long exclusiveness.

All the castes whose relative positions in the caste-hierarchy have been shown in the accompanying table are endogamous. There is a permanent social distance between them; the individual is born into a caste, and a subsequent change in status is, except to the very lowest strata of society, equally impossible upwards or downwards.[1] In general it may be said that people accept food at the hands of all castes occupying a higher level in this hierarchy, the only exception being that of the Vaddar, who do not accept food from the highly placed Sakali and Mar.gali. Without exception people on a higher level refuse food from those on a lower level. Each caste has a traditional occupation sanctioned by religion, and these monopolies should not be infringed upon, except in the case of agriculture, which all may pursue.

Mention should here be made of the Jangam and the Katike castes, of each of which there is one family in Shamirpet. The Jangam are a semi-priestly caste ritually attached to the Baljas, for whom they tie the 'lingam'—a phallic symbol representing Shiva—and function as priests on the occasion of weddings. On the days of *Pitra Moksha Amavasya*[2] and *Shivaratri*,[3] they visit Hindu houses, particularly of those peasants who follow the Shaivite[4]

[1] When a person is excommunicated or out-casted he is not down-graded and pushed into a lower caste; he is merely denied the privileges of equal participation in the socio-religious life of the community.

[2] The night of the New Moon in the Hindu month of Bhadrapada (August–September).

[3] The day on which Shiva is believed to have drunk the world's poison, retaining it in his throat, and thereby saving mankind from possible harm from this poison.

[4] Of the great gods of the Hindu 'trinity' Brahma is not worshipped because of his sinful infatuation for his own daughter, whilst Vishnu and Shiva are worshipped. Those who principally worship the former, usually in his incarnations as Rama and Krishna, are known as Vaishnava; those worshipping the latter as Shaiva or Shaivite. Cf. Dowson, *A Classical Dictionary of Hindu Mythology* (London, 1950), pp. 56–59, 296–300, 360–362.

●564 faith, and beg from them. In Shamirpet, however, there is only one Jangam, who, being an old woman and having no Balja clients in the village, tours in the neighbouring villages in order to beg sufficient for her needs. In point of social status the Jangam can properly be placed a little above the Komti. With the exception of the Brahmins, the other castes, including the Shaivite Komti, eat at their hands. The Katike, who are Hindu butchers, slaughter goats and sheep and sell the mutton to the village folk. In status the Katike is equal to the Kapu-Kummari-Golla group, and he inter-dines with all of them. As all the non-vegetarian Hindu castes including the respectable Reddis eat the meat of animals slaughtered by the Katike, the status of his group is so high.

Most of the castes enumerated above are further subdivided into endogamous divisions which for all practical purposes are themselves independent castes. The Brahmins of Andhra-desa are divided into two main groups—Vaidiki and Niyogi; each of these sections is further subdivided into a number of branches (*shakha*). These *shakha* are endogamous. There is only one family of Brahmins in Shamirpet and it belongs to the Yajurvedi section of the Vaidiki Andhra Brahmins.

The Komtis are divided into six endogamous divisions: Yegina, Yepa, Doodi, Bandur, Neti and Poga. Of these only Yegina Komtis live in Shamirpet.

The Reddis have four major endogamous divisions—Motati, Gudati, Gone and Paknati. All the Reddis of Shamirpet belong to the Gone division.

The Muttarasi have three sections—Muttarasi, Ediga and Besta. In Shamirpet there is no representative of either the Muttarasi or the Besta sections.

The Kummari caste is also divided into four endogamous divisions. They are Balije, Bandar, Cheluka (also known as Setti) and Dandu, of which only Cheluka Kummari live in Shamirpet. It may be noted that with the exception of the Balije section all the other sections of the Kummari caste inter-dine but do not inter-marry. The Balije abstain from meat and drink and on these grounds regard themselves as superior to the other sections of the Kummari caste, with whom they do not inter-dine.

The Gollas have seven endogamous subdivisions: Erra, Pakanati, Do-guita, Muda-Sarla, Pooja, Mushti and Paddanapu; an eighth and inferior division of the Gollas who weave blankets is

known as Kurma. The Pooja Gollas do not follow the traditional caste occupation of shepherds, and they neither eat meat nor drink liquor. With the exception of the Pooja Golla, from whose hands all sections accept food, and the Kurma, at whose hands no sections do, all the other sections inter-dine but do not inter-marry. In Shamirpet there are only two sections of the Gollas, Erra and Paknati. 564

The Sale in Telangana have no endogamous subdivisions. They call themselves Padmashali to distinguish themselves from the Mala Sale, who are akin to the untouchable Malas in social status, but who also follow the profession of weaving.

The Gaondlas are divided into two major sections on the basis of their faith: Vibhuti-darulu, following the Shaivite, and Tirumani-darulu, following the Vaishnavite faith. However, these sections both inter-marry and inter-dine.

The Sakalis have three endogamous groups—Sakali, Bondili, and Turuka, between whom inter-marriage and inter-dining is not permitted.

Among the Mangalis there are only two divisions, Siri and Konda. Inter-marriage between these groups is not permitted. All the families residing in Shamirpet belong to the Siri section.

The Vaddar have two sections: the Rai Vaddar work with stone, and the Gampa Vaddar work with earth. They are mutually exclusive groups, both inter-marriage and inter-dining being prohibited. In Shamirpet there are a few houses each of both these sections.

Similarly, the Erkala have two divisions—Kunche and Tattagulla, the latter only being represented in Shamirpet.

The Pichha-Kuntla too have two sections—Burra and Ganta. They are mutually exclusive from the point of view of inter-dining and inter-marrying. The one Pichha-Kuntla family in Shamirpet belongs to the Burra group.

Traditionally the Malas believe that their community is divided into twelve and a half sections, but no Mala in Shamirpet was able to give the names of all the twelve sections or to give any explanation for the half section. The section residing in Shamirpet describes itself simply as Mala.

Finally, the largest untouchable caste of Telangana, the Madiga, is divided into six major sections. These are Madiga, Nulka Sandayya, Baindla, Sindu, Mashto and Dakkal. The only section

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564 living in Shamirpet is the Madiga. The various sections of the Madiga community have their own special functions which are of great significance for the social life and culture of the caste. The Nulka Sandayya are said to be the descendants of Jamavanta,[1] who is believed to be the founder of the entire Madiga 564 caste. The Baindlas are the marriage priests of the Madigas. Of 463 the Sindus, the men are the minstrels of the Madigas and have the function of reciting the sacred caste legends and enacting them in the form of folk-drama; while the women are the prostitutes of the community. The Mashto earn their living by giving acrobatic displays. The Dakkal are the lowest of all Madiga sections and are distinguished by their customary refusal to take food from any non-Madiga. The Brahmin, who is at the apex of the caste-hierarchy, refuses to partake of food at the hands of anyone with a social status lower than his own, in effect from any but his own caste-fellows. And it is a juxtaposition that the lowest of the low castes refuses food from all communities of the higher levels, including the Brahmins.

614 Each independent endogamous division is divided into exogamous *gotram*; these in turn may be further subdivided into numerous *vansham*. The main function of these divisions is the regulation of marital unions. A person cannot marry in his own *gotram*; he must marry in some other *gotram* bearing a different name. Different *gotram* may have a number of common *vansham*, and as marriage between persons of the same *vansham* is forbidden, one must marry not only outside one's *gotram* but in a different *vansham* also. If a person of one's own *vansham* dies, one must observe ceremonial mourning for ten days. These subdivisions seem to perform no other special function. The enumeration of the various *gotram* and *vansham* is difficult and would only result in long and tedious lists running to forty and fifty names, and will not here be given.

The diagram shown opposite will illustrate the organization of the endogamous sub-castes *gotram* and *vansham* within the wider social unit of caste in the area under study.

In the diagram each sub-caste is endogamous; and as such a person born in unit 1 must marry within that unit, and so also persons in units 2, 3 and 4 must confine their marital relations to their respective units only. But each of these units is divided into a

[1] A conspicuous figure playing a significant role in the epic of *Ramayana*.

sexual union of any type between the two is regarded as a kind of incest. It has already been pointed out that these units have no functions beyond those mentioned above and have no common organization, authority or ceremonial distinctively belonging to them.

Although in general we can regard Shamirpet as fairly representative of Telangana villages, some Telugu-speaking castes which play an important part in rural Telangana are not to be found in the village; and it will be perhaps advantageous to make a passing reference to some of these castes here. The Velma are a rich agricultural caste more or less equal in status to the Reddis. The Kamma are another caste of the Kapu group who inter-dine with the Reddi, but they are regarded as equals of the lower clean caste groups. The Balja traders are Shaivite Hindus whose status is regarded as being a little higher than that of the Komti. The Gandla works the oil press, and his status is similar to that of the Sale and the Gaondla. The Yenadi, who in some parts of Telangana act as village guards, are in status equal to the Erkala. The Lambada provide a colourful though somewhat alien element in the population of Telangana. In language, dress and ornament they stand out from the rest of the people of Telangana. Their northern origin is clear both from their physical appearance and from their language. The dress of the Lambada woman is picturesque. Her multi-coloured skirt (*lahanga*), tight bodice (*choli*) and upper covering (*odhni*) are elaborately embroidered and worked with appliquéd mirror. Her ornaments are heavy and distinctive, and their tinkling sound lends an air of romance to the dusty roads of the countryside. There is a Lambada settlement some six miles from Shamirpet and they are a common sight on the nearby road.

Mention should also be made of three wandering caste groups—the Balsantanam, the Sharda-galu and the Dasari. The Balsantanam live in small, low, portable huts and move from village to village. They weave mats, sing songs and legends, and beg from village cultivators. The Sharda-galu are professional story-tellers and earn their livelihood by reciting the legends of their vast repertoire. Similarly, the Dasari are country dramatists who contribute towards the entertainment of the villagers by performing folk plays. Members of many of the castes mentioned above make occasional appearances in Shamirpet.

1: Dube E-5 (1951-52) 1955 AW17 Telugu AW17

to be organized by the village community as a whole. If smallpox, cholera or plague is reported in any nearby village or from Shamirpet itself, it has to fix the day on which the whole village shall perform religious worship in order to ward off the epidemic. It fixes the contribution which should be made by the different families to any communal undertaking. In any undertaking concerning the village as a whole the initiative often comes from the *panchayat*. For example, if a temple or shrine has to be constructed or a tank or well has to be repaired, the matter would be placed before the *panchayat*. This body would plan the measure and then proceed to fix all the details. It will determine the amount of the contributions to be raised, and collect it from each family. If it is necessary to approach the government for financial help in the matter, the *panchayat* would first thoroughly analyse the subject and examine all the possibilities. Only after such a discussion would it determine the precise steps to be taken. Similarly, if a complaint has to be made against any government official, the matter is first discussed by the *panchayat*.

In the village community there are several groups and factions; the various cliques often hold divergent views. However, at the meetings of the *panchayat* the minority almost always yields to the majority—mostly without any grumbling. But once the *panchayat* has risen a protégé of the dissenting clique may be instigated to defy the decisions of the council. With the emergence of several factions within the community, and the tacit encouragement given by some of the minority groups to certain offenders to ignore its decisions, the authority of the *panchayat* has been slightly weakened. In consequence, even when the *panchayat* has heard them and given its verdict, some cases drag on in a state of indecision. From time to time they come up for reconsideration, but two or three years often elapse before a final decision is made. Some long-drawn-out cases are decided by the active intervention of the Revenue or Police officials. But such cases are few. Only a comparatively rich person can defy the *panchayat*, for unless he is able to bribe one of the minority cliques, he cannot enlist their sympathy and support in the lengthy proceedings. In most of the ordinary cases the decision of the *panchayat* is binding and final.

It has been pointed out that the *panchayat* includes all the headmen of the different caste-groups as well as of the Muslim community. These headmen do not merely represent their respective

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623 564 castes; they are expected to do much more. In fact, a caste headman is the link between the residents of the village belonging to his own caste and, on the one hand, the common organization of the village as a unit, and, on the other, the wider caste organization of the entire neighbouring region. When the caste *panchayat* of the entire block constituting the regional community holds its meeting it is invariably the caste headman who participates in its 622 626 564 deliberations on behalf of his village caste group. The office is hereditary, passing from father to son. But if the son has not attained maturity at the time of the death of his father, and is consequently not in a position to take over the responsibility, one of the brothers of the deceased may exercise the authority on behalf of the minor. In some cases even after attaining maturity the son remains only the nominal head, while his uncle continues to be the *de facto* chief. The general consensus of opinion regarding the function of the caste headman appears to be that 'he should keep his people under control' and 'not allow them to stray from the traditional ways of life'. 'If boys of my community do not behave themselves, the *panchayat* reprimands me for not keeping them under control. The village headman says that I must check them, but what powers do I have?' remarked one caste headman. With regard to his functions there is a general unanimity. 'Under a good caste headman boys of the caste obey established authority, respect is shown to the elders and quarrels are not often heard from houses in his jurisdiction.' All this he must do by the sheer force of his personality, for the nature of his authority is not well defined. 'He must be strict and firm, and also considerate and helpful. If he is only strict he will not be able to get the willing co-operation of his people. If he is too lenient nobody will pay any heed to what he says.' It has been pointed out earlier that some of the caste headmen are only nominal members of the *panchayat* and that at its meetings others speak on behalf of the caste. With one exception, these caste headmen lack the above qualities, and in general their caste people do not have much regard for their views. At least two of the hereditary caste chiefs are regarded with scorn by their own people and with ridicule by the villagers. Among the successful caste headmen, E. D. R., the leader of the Kapu (agriculturist) group, may be mentioned. He is in his late thirties, but even older people listen to him. If a son does not show due regard to his parents or a husband and wife quarrel too often and too publicly;

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f one of his caste fellows fails to fulfil the terms of his obligations or in any other way brings dishonour to the caste; if boys get unmanageable or girls earn an evil reputation for easy virtue, he effectively enters the scene, gives suggestions and advice, admonshes people if they do not seem amenable to persuasion, and in the case of adolescents and young boys may even inflict light corporal punishment. In his dealings with people E. D. R. possesses some dramatic qualities which make him something of a hero to his people. With his great influence in the counsels of the village he commands obedience from his own caste fellows as well as from many others. V. P. R., in a sense E. D. R.'s rival, has also a strong personality, and although he is not the recognized head of the caste he exercises considerable control over 'his area of influence'. Because of his influence he is one of those who are invited to participate in the deliberations of the *panchayat*. However, the two men exercise considerable tact in dealing with each other, and so far there has been no effective challenge to the position of E. D. R. The position of the head in a caste is what its holder chooses to make it. Ambitious rivals can steal some of his light and authority. If he proves unsuitable he may for all practical purposes be superseded by someone who is abler or more ambitious and aggressive.

The structure of the family and part played by the 'head' in its affairs will be analysed in a subsequent chapter. It will suffice here to point out that the type of family organization in Shamirpet and the neighbouring rural areas is patrilineal and patrilocal. Joint families are regarded as ideal, although there is a tendency for sons to separate after marriage, and brothers almost always separate some time after the father's death. The eldest male is generally regarded as the chief of the household, and, according to tradition, he must benevolently dominate the scene. Younger members of the household must show respect to him and his wishes. In his turn the head of the family should treat his brothers or sons equally, 'as alike as his two eyes'. A serious socio-religious offence committed by one member of the family would result in the excommunication of the whole family. As such the head of the family must watch the actions of all the members of his household and advise, warn or admonish them according to the necessity of the situation. The head of the family is answerable to the caste and the village councils for the members of his household, and this

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night. Dogs, cats and donkeys dying in the village have to be disposed of by him, for the Madigas only deal with dead cattle and will have nothing to do with other carcases. The Yettis in Shamirpet are from the Sakali and the Madiga castes. The Sakali Yettis do most of the superior kinds of menial work, such as carrying the baggage of touring government officials who would not allow their luggage to be carried by the untouchable Madigas; while the Madiga Yettis have to do all sorts of odd jobs of an inferior nature. They may be required to patrol the village, to keep watch on government buildings and to sweep and clean the village occasionally. They are also required to bring fuel for the use of touring government officials. The Yettis are not paid any salary for their work, and the nominal payments made to them by touring officials bear no proportion to the work done by them. The rest of the village menials are occupational caste groups, also performing some semi-government duties. The Wadla, for example, must repair the flood-gates of the tank, attend to the repairs of furniture and other woodwork in government offices, repair the central flag post in the village and supply free of charge or on nominal payment the pegs required for fixing the tents of touring government officials. When required the Kammari do iron work for the government officials. The Kummari has to supply earthen pots for use on public occasions or for the use of touring government officials. The Sakali cleans the kitchen utensils and plates of touring government officials, washes their clothes and carries their baggage to the next camp. The Mangali lights the lamps in the village rest-house, shaves touring officials and massages their bodies if they require this service. The Ausula has the duty of examining, when required to do so, coins which are believed to be counterfeit. He has also to help the police in weighing stolen ornaments and in making estimates of their approximate market price. Finally, the Dappu and the Kommu, who are both Madigas, play their drums and pipes respectively on public occasions. They make all public announcements by the beat of drum and are, like the Yetti, often required to do other menial work as well.

3. INTER-CASTE AND INTER-VILLAGE ORGANIZATION

The village is a territorial unit, the smallest but most significant among territorial groups in the social organization of the village

communities. Persons belonging to several different castes are united by some common values and obligations in this unit. But caste as a unit of social organization cuts across the narrow boundaries of the village and extends to a fairly wide geographical region. The *varna* system or the fivefold division of Hindu society is an all-India phenomenon, but in the different geographical and linguistic regions these *varnas* are divided into numerous castes (*jati*) which are practically distinct from and independent of comparable castes in other areas. Thus in South India, in the Tamil, Malayalam and Telugu-speaking regions respectively, there are separate groups of Brahmins who constitute independent castes. There are numerous restrictions on inter-dining, and intermarriage between them is not permitted. All these groups will be designated by the generic term Brahmin; but in actual practice they are each a separate caste characterized by endogamy and distinctive local traditions. It has been pointed out earlier that culturally Shamirpet lies in the area of Telangana, which is a part of the larger culture-area of Andhra-desa. Most of the castes in the village confine their social intercourse to Telangana itself, a few extending it to other parts of Andhra-desa. The Muslims, being converts to an alien religion, are not obliged to observe this rule and can freely inter-marry with Muslim immigrants from other parts; but among them also marriage between people already having some blood ties is preferred. For Hindu castes it may be said that in actual practice a number of neighbouring villages constitute for them a quasi-independent local group within the wider regional community. In analysing one hundred and twenty family case-histories, it was found that out of three hundred and eighty marriages over 68% were confined to a group of villages (and the cities of Hyderabad and Secundrabad) within a radius of approximately thirty-five miles from Shamirpet; 30% to other villages within sixty miles of the village; and only 2% in still more distant villages or towns. In no case was a marital union entered into with a non-Telugu caste, even with a similar caste name and social status in another linguistic or geographical area. Thus the horizontal ties of caste extend to the whole culture area, but active social relationships are generally confined to a cluster of neighbouring villages.

Two types of inter-village organizations deserve to be noted. They are councils of the different castes and inter-village councils.

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THE BRAHMIN

793 791 There is only one Brahmin family in the village. The head of this family enjoys considerable local prestige owing to the fact of his birth, and also because he is a substantial landowner. He is the local priest as well as an astrologer. People consult him regarding the suitability of proposed marriages, and when negotiations are completed they seek his astrological calculations regarding an auspicious date and time for the wedding itself. He officiates at the marriage ceremony among the higher castes. On childbirth he is consulted about the planetary position at the actual time of the baby's birth, and its astrological implications for the child as well as for the parents and the other members of the family. If the reading indicates any difficulty, the Brahmin is often commissioned to offer special worship and perform the necessary rituals to ward off the evil. Similarly, after a death the Brahmin is consulted. If it is found that the time of death was inauspicious the members of the household may be asked to leave the residence temporarily, for a period of three to six months, according to the advice of the Brahmin. These consultations on the occasions of birth and death are generally sought only by the people of higher castes and by those who are well-to-do. Prescribed fees have to be paid to the Brahmin in cash for these consultations. Indirectly, the Brahmin contributes also to the agricultural activities of the community. He advises the agriculturists on when to start sowing at the beginning of the agricultural year. He is also consulted regarding the auspicious dates for starting weeding and harvesting. The date of the New Eating ceremony for the different families in the village is fixed by him. For these consultations no one pays him in cash. He visits the houses of his agriculturist clients fortnightly or once a month, especially in the harvesting season, and is customarily given a certain quantity of grain by each family.

THE KOMTI

564 443 426 The Komtis are traders. They also function as village moneylenders. They keep a permanent small shop at some central point in the village, and also attend the weekly markets in the neighbouring villages. They generally sell provisions for cash, although things may also be bought on credit by those who are known to

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the shopkeeper and are willing to pay slightly higher prices. They advance money to the people for buying bullocks and agricultural implements. A mortgage is not insisted upon in all cases, but the rate of compound interest which they charge is often exorbitant. The Komtis also advance seed grain to the people. For this, too, they charge a heavy interest. Loans are often taken by people against the mortgage of land or a part of the crops, depending upon the sum of money which they borrow. In Shamirpet the Komtis seem to be the only caste whose monopoly has been seriously affected by the change of times. To-day Shamirpet has in all thirteen shops. If we do not take into account some of the petty shops, four of these belong to Komtis, two to Muslims, two to Toddy-tappers and one to a goldsmith. Even in the field of advancing cash and seeds for agricultural purposes, the Komtis have to face the competition of some of the comparatively rich Reddi and Muslim cultivators.

THE KUMMARI

In Shamirpet there are five families of potters, with fourteen people actually working at the wheel. Each family is attached to some agriculturists in the village, and it periodically supplies them with a certain number of earthen pots for domestic use. Every two or three years they also supply the agriculturists with large baked earthen bins for storing grain. For this they do not expect a cash price. At the time of harvesting the potter visits the fields of the family to which he is attached, and is given *bheek-bali*, that is his share of the new crop. The quantity of grain that is given away depends on the size of the land cultivated, and also partly on the owner's financial circumstances. On the occasion of rituals connected with birth, marriage or death a supply of new pots is expected from him. Tradition has prescribed the minimum payment required for these services, although on happy occasions people often give a little more. If he can arrive at an agreement with the other occupational castes, such as the barber, the washerman and the weaver, he will offer them his services in return for their occupational services to his family. The details are fixed by the parties concerned, and often considerable haggling and making of charges and counter-charges against one another go on. Notwithstanding this, the system works quite satisfactorily, for out of forty-four cases of such mutual arrangements studied very

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323 closely at Shamirpet only in six were the relations finally broken
•564 off on account of dissatisfaction to either or both parties. Non-agriculturists and such occupational castes as do not have arrangements with the potter buy their requirements from him for a cash price. The Kummari families of Shamirpet have more clients and customers in some of the neighbouring villages which have no potters' families living in them.

THE GOLLA

[361] The shepherds occupy a block of their own in the village. Some
233 of them cultivate small land-holdings, but the major source of
564 livelihood for all of them is their traditional occupation of keeping
476 herds of goats and sheep. They may keep one or two cows and buffaloes besides these herds which are their livelihood. They have an elaborate lore regarding these animals, and they are experts in caring for quite large herds. They train country dogs to help them in this, and with their aid prevent the goats from going
[782] astray when they are taken out for grazing in the forest. By turns the Golla families in the village contribute goats or sheep for sacrifice in the village ceremonies. For this they are not paid. With this exception, they carry on all other transactions with the village people in cash. When people buy goats and sheep, the owner of the animal is always paid in cash. For goat's milk they expect spot payment, but arrangements for weekly or monthly payments may be made in the case of regular buyers. However, in one respect they may also enter into an agreement with the agriculturists which may entitle them to a small share of each harvest. After the harvest, when all the crops have been reaped, the agriculturists ask the Gollas to graze their herds on their fields and keep them penned in during the night. As there is very little fodder in the fields, the shepherds take the goats and sheep out for grazing in the nearby forest, and during the night keep them in the field.
[241] The urine and dung of the herd is believed to be good manure, and as such this service is much in demand by the agriculturists. The shepherds often fix days with the agriculturists, and each one has his turn only on a limited number of days. According to the nature of agreement between the cultivators and the shepherds, the payment is either in cash or the latter collect their dues from the fields at the time of harvesting.

ECONOMIC STRUCTURE

THE SALE

The Sale consider themselves superior to the other artisan castes. Nowadays they no longer work on the basis of affiliation to the village agriculturists. According to an old informant, 'In the good old days when the Sale used to spin their thread in addition to weaving cloth, they also entered into a definite arrangement with the agriculturists, as most castes do to-day. They supplied us with a certain length of cloth every year, and in return we gave them some grain at each harvest. But now times have changed. They buy yarn manufactured in the mills, weave fancy cloth and sell it for cash.' The weavers have now practically abandoned the traditional system. Only with certain occupational castes do they arrive at a working arrangement under which, in return for their services, they give them an agreed length of cloth. In the course of our investigations we found that such arrangements existed between weavers on the one hand, and potters, barbers and washermen on the other.

THE GAONDLA

The villagers in this area are very fond of *sendi*, or fermented palm juice. The Gaondla shops are the centre of attraction in the evenings for men—young and old—as well as for many middle-aged and old women. This caste has the monopoly of tapping the different kinds of palm trees, and also of selling the fermented juice, and has admirably succeeded in maintaining it, notwithstanding the introduction of the system by which government leases trees to the highest bidders irrespective of their caste. In Shamirpet, so far, there has been no challenge to their monopoly; although occasionally the Madigas and other poor people steal juice from the pots tied to the trees by the Gaondlas. The Gaondlas first mark out the trees to be tapped, then actually tap them in the afternoons and evenings, and tie pots at the points where each tree has been tapped to collect the dripping juice. Early next morning they go round to these trees again, climb up, and bring back to the village all the juice collected during the night. This is kept by them in large earthen pots and retailed to customers on demand, expecially in the afternoon and in the evening. One of the Gaondla families in the village has a government contract for other liquors and intoxicants. In addition to the fermented palm juice, that shop also sells several other varieties of liquor obtained from distilleries

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in Hyderabad. Payment is generally in cash, and only in exceptional cases may a credit account be maintained.

THE PANCH BRAMHA GROUP

In an earlier chapter mention has already been made of the group of artisan castes who designate themselves as Panch Bramha and maintain a certain degree of exclusiveness from the other Hindu castes. Out of these, two groups, namely, the Wadla (carpenter) and the Kammari (blacksmith), enter into relations of permanent affiliation to the agriculturists. Under this system, they have to supply new agricultural implements periodically, and look after their maintenance and repairs. In return for these services they get a share of the crops which they have to collect from the fields when harvesting is in progress. In addition to this, they practise their own occupation independently. All their services to non-agriculturists, as well as their services of a non-agricultural nature, must be paid for. The carpenter makes the wooden marriage-post required for several of the rites of Hindu weddings. For this he is paid a small fee prescribed by tradition. The blacksmith repairs and periodically supplies new iron agricultural implements, but in this case the agriculturist concerned has to supply the iron, charcoal and a labourer to work the bellows. The other three groups, that is the goldsmiths, workers in bell metal and carvers of images, specialize in fields which have little or almost nothing to do with agriculture; and as such they carry on their crafts independently.

THE SAKALI AND THE MANGALI

The barber and the washerman have no direct contribution to make to the agricultural pursuits of the landowners, but their services are required so often by the agriculturist, especially in their socio-religious ceremonies and rituals connected with birth, marriage and death, that the agriculturists find it more convenient to have families from these castes permanently affiliated to their households. For their normal services all the year round, that is for shaving and hair-cutting, or for washing clothes, they collect their share after each harvest. Other services, especialiy those connected with socio-religious activities, are generally provided for in the rituals themselves, for at several points in their progress these castes have to be given something, either in cash

or in kind. In the course of a long ceremony, two or three times they may get money, twice or thrice some grain or a few brass or bell-metal utensils, and ultimately a set of new clothes. Like the other castes, the barber and the washerman also work independently outside the system of these traditional arrangements.

OTHER CASTES

Before describing the system of family affiliation between the Madiga untouchables and the agriculturists, brief mention should be made of the other castes in the village.

There is only one family of Katike (Hindu butchers) in the village. In point of social status this family ranks equal to the Kapu group. The head of the family slaughters goats and sheep and sells meat to the villagers. The Muslims slaughter their goats and sheep separately or buy their requirement of beef from the market in the city. Shamirpet is largely a Hindu village, and partly out of regard for the sentiments of the majority community, and partly to avoid trouble, the Muslims do not slaughter cows in the village.

The solitary family of the Darzi (tailor) with an old sewing machine is obviously a new addition to the population of the village. Even by modest city standards the abilities of this tailor in his craft must be regarded as rather crude. Yet he has a fairly good business in the village. Except for the well-to-do people, and a few others who maintain regular contact with the city, all others either buy cheap ready-made clothes, or they get their tailoring done by this man in the village, who also attracts considerable custom from nearby villages.

The families of Vaddars (stone-workers) always have sufficient work, either in Shamirpet itself or in some of the neighbouring villages. Those who can afford a house of a superior type have it built of stone. Use of bricks is very rare in this part of the country and thus practically all substantial houses in the village are of stone. The rocky surroundings of the village provide an ample supply, and the Vaddars, adept in the traditional technique of breaking and shaping stone, turn it into a useful building material. Because of their crude technique the work of the Vaddars is very hard indeed and entails considerable physical exertion. Payment for this work is generally on the basis of piece wages. In the busy agricultural season the Vaddars accept other work also [illegible] wages.

agricultural season the Vaddars accept other work also for extra wages.

The Erkalas earn their livelihood through a variety of means. The menfolk are hunters. They are also adept in the use of snares and traps. They train hunting dogs and use them effectively for chasing and tracking wounded animals. When they succeed in getting some game, they retain a part of it for their domestic consumption and sell the rest to the villagers. The women beg in the countryside by singing songs and narrating legends. They also do some fortune-telling. Family earnings are supplemented by basket-making, a task at which both men and women work. They also rear pigs.

THE MADIGAS

The Madigas are the lowest caste in Shamirpet. Economically they constitute the poorest section of the community. While the Malas, who are also untouchables but a degree higher than the Madigas, either cultivate their own land or work as farm labourers for daily wages, the Madigas affiliate themselves to the households of the substantial agriculturists in the village. According to the size of the land-holding of the cultivator, one or more Madiga families permanently attach themselves to him. At every stage of agricultural operations during the year the attached Madiga, and his wife and children, work in the fields of their master. They are not paid any daily wages. After the crops are harvested they have to go and 'beg' in the master's fields or threshing grounds. The conventions of the community have prescribed the rates of payment, mostly on the basis of the area of land under cultivation and the yield during the particular harvest. Thus for a certain area a basic minimum must be given; but if on account of good crops the yield has been high it is expected that the affiliated Madiga family would be given a proportionately larger share. In former times there used to be considerable compulsion, and, being in no position to protest, the Madigas had to slave for their masters, who could be quite ruthless. If the master was kind and considerate, they regarded it as their good luck. On the whole it was advisable for them to tolerate even a bad master, for any protests or refusal to do the allotted work on their part would eventually have meant their being forced to leave the village. Now, of course, conditions have changed, and Madigas do not any longer put up with indig-

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nities, unreasonable harshness in behaviour or rough handling. Payments differ on the basis of the quality and quantity of work they turn out, and also partly on the nature and temperament of the employer. Slow and lazy workers are paid the barest minimum, while the experienced and the efficient earn much more. In the words of a Madiga, 'If we do not work well, who will pay us? If we do very little work and that too badly, we get what we deserve in the end. If we do not work well we cannot afford to be sensitive; we have to be thick-skinned to stand the abuse of our master. But if we work hard and earn our wages by the sweat of our brow, the master has to treat us well.' To quote another informant: 'Some masters are large-hearted. They make us work hard, but they feed us well. Others expect us to work like oxen, but when it comes to feeding us they dole out mere handfuls as if we were little calves. They always grumble and curse, but when it is time for making payment to us they seem to forget that we too must have a morsel to fill our bellies and a yard of cloth to cover our bodies.' In addition to what the Madiga families get by 'begging' at the time of harvesting, during the busy agricultural season they are fed once a day by the master. According to convention, the master should give a new cloth once every year to each individual from the attached Madiga family who has worked in his fields.

Very few Madigas possess any land worth mentioning, and therefore independent cultivation by them is almost negligible. But they have several other additional means of subsistence open to them. They have to dispose of the dead cattle in the village. As they do not refrain from carrion, this constitutes one source of food supply for them. They are also entitled to get one half of the hide of the dead animal; the other half belongs to the owner. From the owner's share of the hide the Madigas have to make for him such leather articles as he may require for agricultural purposes. Several Madiga families cure hides and work in leather; others earn a part of their living by playing drums and pipes at ceremonial occasions.

2. AGRICULTURE

The settled area of Shamirpet, including the two neighbouring hamlets, is spread over an area of 58 acres. Out of this Shamirpet proper occupies 31·4 acres. In the land surrounding the settlement,

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796 563 for the sake of the fun that they expect to find in the fair. A closer examination of the Hindu festivals and ceremonies reveals that a large number of all-India Hindu festivals are observed in the community; but a good many of these are restricted to the 'twice 796 born' castes of the Brahmin and the Komti. Some of them are • 564 observed by a few other higher castes, or often only by a few 'respectable' families in these castes. Ceremonies and worship connected with these festivals are conducted by the Brahmin in castes occupying a level higher than that of the Sakali and the Mangali (excluding the Panch Bramha group). The Sakali and the Mangali invite the Brahmin if they can afford it, or else they manage with a caste priest. While the Brahmin and the Komti, of all the castes, are most interested in a majority of the festivals of this category, in the common village ritual they are passive and distant observers. In the two major festivals of the village, which involve considerable inter-caste co-operation, it is the Kummari[1] who officiates as the priest and not the Brahmin. The bulk of Hindus celebrate relatively few of the all-India festivals with great enthusiasm, but it could be said that groups occupying higher rungs in the ladder of caste hierarchy are found to observe more of these festivals. In fact the higher the status of a caste the greater is the number of these that it observes; and thus we find the Komtis observing more of these festivals than any other Hindu caste, with the sole exception of the Brahmin who, being of a superior caste, observes a few festivals more than the Komti. The local village cults are still living and vital. In them the participation of the two highest castes is nominal; but that of the other castes complete. The Kapu group of agricultural castes occupying an intermediate position in the caste hierarchy participate in both sets of rituals with equal enthusiasm.

4. RITUAL OF THE LIFE CYCLE

184 561 The basic pattern of ceremonies connected with the major crises of life is the same in all sections of the Hindus in the village community; but in the minor details of the ritual there is considerable difference in the practices of different castes. More than this, even within a particular caste the rites and observances are not identical, for in some respects individual families have their own traditions. In the course of our field-work we found the catalogu-

1 [i.e., member of potter caste.--ANALYST]

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Muslims

Muslim State, the Hindus had their revenge by pouring scorn openly on Muslim religion and society. It was now the turn of the Muslims to observe silence, and tolerate humiliation and insults. At the time of our investigations, however, most of these passions had subsided, and no significant tensions were observed. As groups both Hindus and Muslims regard themselves as superior in point of religion. From the socio-economic point of view the Muslims can be regarded as an exclusive caste whose social standing is roughly equal to that of the agricultural castes.

Caste as a factor of social differentiation is more significant. It has been pointed out that in its structure, the caste system has definitely a hierarchical character. Between the highest and the lowest castes, there are several intermediate levels. The social status of a person is largely determined by his caste. The mere fact of birth in a particular caste gives a good initial start to some and puts obstacles in the way of others. In a subsequent chapter I propose to examine some of the stereotypes current in the village community regarding the qualities and characteristics of different castes; but notwithstanding these the relative position of the different castes in the village community is determined by the traditional scale.

Religion and caste are more or less fixed and permanent factors. While change of faith is possible, and under certain circumstances a person can even descend from one of the higher castes to the lowest, such changes are very rare. At any rate no one takes recourse to them to bring about a change in his social status. The only case of change of faith recorded by us in the village is that of the present headmaster of the school who was a Brahmin to begin with, but later embraced Islam. No case of change of caste came to our notice.

In a predominantly agricultural society it is natural to expect that possession of land and cattle would contribute greatly to an individual's social status. Birth into a family of landowners ensures that a person will grow up to be a respected member of the village community. Acquisition of land would very materially affect the social position even of a person of humble birth, and if he does not behave tactlessly it would greatly enhance his prestige. An untouchable Mala peasant is now counted among the influential cultivators of the village and is given a place of honour in its counsels. He is still an untouchable and would continue to remain

577 unmistakable appreciation. Cowardice and treachery are condemned, but people still indulge in malicious gossip and back-
152 biting. Mutual suspicion characterizes the general nature of inter-personal relations. Two families on the road to prosperity are likely to be jealous of each other; but adversity almost never fails to bring them nearer and closer. Exercising little control over their emotions, people get excited very quickly; anger and friendship are both aroused in them with equal ease.

571 A study of inter-group relations will give us a better idea of the nature and quality of the attitudes that largely govern inter-personal relations in the community. For this we shall first examine the inter-caste attitudes embodied in stereotypes, and later analyse similar attitudes and opinions covering two sets of rival groups—educated and uneducated, and those with urban contacts and those without them.

564 INTER-CASTE ATTITUDES: SOME STEREOTYPES

186 Inter-caste attitudes find expression in several stereotypes which
[522] are a part of the thought patterns of the people, and find expression both in jest and banter as well as in quarrels and outbursts of anger. Among others, the following stereotypes and related anecdotes were noted in Shamirpet.

The Brahmin is 'pious from outside, but not so at heart'. He is 'tricky and calculating'. 'He instigates people, but always keeps himself in the background.'

The Komti is 'a born coward, but a shrewd business man'. 'When he says anything on oath, take it that he is telling a deliberate falsehood.' 'He spares no ingenuity to save even a counterfeit coin.' 'Gods do not penalize a Komti for telling lies, he is born to do that.' The anecdotes concerning the miserliness of the Komtis are indeed many and varied. 'If a fly falls in butter-milk, rich people will throw the butter-milk away, the poor will throw away the fly and drink the butter-milk. But the Komti squeezes out the butter-milk before throwing the fly away.' 'If a relation comes to the house of a Komti and the time of the evening meal approaches, he will think, "If this guest goes home, I shall be able to save one meal." The guest on the other hand thinks, "If I stay here a little while more, one meal will be saved at home." And a battle of wits goes on to save just one meal.' The stories of their

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cowardice are also many. 'A Komti is a warrior in words, but a rat in deeds.' 'If you strike him once he will say, "Strike me a second time and I will see." If you strike him a second time, he will say, "Strike me a third time and I shall show you what it means to beat me." You go on beating him, and all that he will do is to repeat his threats without having the courage to hit back even once.'

Of the Kapu, or agricultural castes, general public opinion seems to be good. 'They are a hard-working people, faithfully attached to the soil.' 'The Kapus are the *annadata*, literally producers of agricultural wealth. If they do not cultivate the land and produce grain, what shall we eat?' Social comment is generally unfavourable on the rich Reddi landlords who make excessive demands on the tenants.

The Kummari's place in common village talk is not very enviable. 'Living in the world of his earthen pots, he knows little of the world outside.' 'Because he works continuously at the wheel, no strength is left in his loins. No wonder, he cannot satisfy his wife.'

More than anyone else, the Golla is the butt of many cruel jokes. He is criticized for his simplicity, for his dirtiness and for his awkward gestures and rustic manner of speech. His shocking cowardice too is often commented upon. 'He tends sheep. He is no better than one of his flock.' 'The Golla is a model of cleanliness. Look at his body, it is covered with lice all over.' 'See, how a Golla talks! If you hear him from a distance you will think that he is quarrelling with someone; but no, he is discussing with his wife what to cook for the evening meal.' In animated discussion the Gollas are certainly given to much gesticulation. 'Others also gesticulate but the mannerisms of the Gollas are remarkably different.' 'In sheer cowardice only a Sale will excel him.' 'Bluff him, threaten him and a Golla will readily agree to what you say. He is too thick-headed to understand you otherwise.' 'You can never know what a Golla will do. Give him a sweet-smelling flower and he will put it in his anus.'

In the village community the Sale caste symbolizes cowardice. If anyone is afraid of going out in the dark or runs away from a fight, people remark, 'Are you the son of a Sale? That alone can explain your remarkable bravery.' This is one of the most widely prevalent and generally accepted stereotypes. Many a Sale would

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186 564 also accept it, and using different words would say, 'We mind our work and do not get mixed up in local affairs. What use is it fighting like animals?' Others generally say, 'If you strike a Komti with a stick, he will hit you back with his tongue. He has at least a store of filthy abuse which he uses as a weapon of defence. But the Sale is too timid to do even this. All that he can do is to run into his house and hide himself.'

The Gaondla, 'when he is poor, carries empty pots of palm-juice from every house; but when he amasses wealth, his head turns. Then he learns to speak the language of the urban people.'

The Sakali is 'after all a washerman. One who washes the dirty clothes of the rest of the community cannot himself remain clean.' Women belonging to this caste have a reputation for their great capacity for drinking. 'They do not require much persuasion for granting sexual favours to people outside the caste; and the devils —Sakali women—are such adepts in sexual technique that anyone falling into their clutches once remains their slave for ever.'

There are several witty stories about the status of the Mangali (barber). 'No doubt his general status is low, but he always has the advantage of the company of rich and influential men. Do you not sit with him while he is cutting your hair and giving you a shave? Even rich agriculturists have to allow him to sit near them as if he were their equal in status.' 'It is true that his status is not very high. But who does not bow to him? While cutting a king's hair the barber orders "Bend a little towards me", and the king unquestioningly obeys him. Who else can catch hold of your hair, pull your ears or slap you on the cheek? Ask a barber to cut your hair and shave you, and you will have the answer.' 'The agriculturists always have to worry about their crops—in some years they grow well, in others they do not. But there is no uncertainty about the crops harvested by a barber—the beards of his clients grow with an unfailing regularity.'

[751] The castes in the Panch Bramha group are not regarded as particularly auspicious. 'While starting on a journey if you happen to see a person belonging to one of these groups, you should take it as a sign of ill-luck. It indicates a possible failure of your mission.'

'The Mala and the Madiga will be rude if you are gentle with them, and will be gentle if you are rude to them.' 'Kick him first

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and then ask him to do a thing, a Madiga will never refuse. Ask him to do something in soft words and he will have a thousand excuses ready.'

Although Shamirpet has maintained, even in the worst years of communal tension, a fairly honourable record of communal harmony and the relations between the Hindu and the Muslim sections of the village population have been cordial in every sense, the two communities have some generalized notions about the inherent qualities and attributes of each other. The Hindus will say, 'The untouchables are impure, but Muslims are poisonous. If you touch a Madiga you may have to sever only the finger with which you touched him, but if you touch a Muslim you will have to cut off the arm itself.' 'The Muslims are good only in two things —they eat and copulate like beasts. Who else except a Muslim would ever think of going to bed with his uncle's daughter, who is next only to his real sister.' The Muslims are regarded as showy and ostentatious. 'A Muslim will eat stale rice inside his house, but when coming out he will apply some clarified butter to his lips. Then he will belch loudly and say, "How much fried rice and meat have I eaten to-day".' With regard to conversion to Islam the Hindus often say, 'A Hindu untouchable of yesterday becomes a Muslim to-day; and to-morrow he will start proclaiming that his forefathers lived in Arabia!' The Muslims, having for generations prided themselves as the ruling race of Hyderabad, tend to look down upon the Hindus, and make fun of their numerous gods and superstitious beliefs. On the whole the Muslims regard the other community as 'cowardly and mean'. But the recent changes in the political fortunes of the State, resulting in the end of Muslim rule, have had a sobering effect on the Muslims, and now they do not take the offensive against their Hindu neighbours, as some of them very commonly did in the period preceding the Police Action of 1948.

I have pointed out earlier that most of these stereotypes find expression in jest and banter, and occasionally in outbursts of anger. While each caste seeks to proclaim and prove its own superiority in some respect it invariably holds some generalized notions, such as those described above, about the inherent qualities of the other castes. It is believed that there can be individual exceptions to the rule, but regarding the castes themselves these stereotypes are valid. However, very few of these notions influence

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578 the general tone of life in the community. Inter-group tension between Hindus and Muslims, engendered partly by political controversies in the Hyderabad State, threatened disharmony and possible breach of peace in the village in the period preceding and following the intervention of the Government of India. The recognition of the *fait accompli* in the State by the Muslims and the change in their approach and attitude towards the Hindus soon 666 established cordial relations between the two communities. At 578 the time of our investigations the Brahmin/non-Brahmin controversy, which was governing the political alignments of people within the State to a considerable extent, had its echoes in Shamirpet also. In the Telangana area, in general, it was taking the shape of an open conflict of interest between Brahmins and Reddis. In Shamirpet the individual relations between the Brahmin household and the Reddi residents of the community were very cordial; but in the discussion of general political and social questions there was a persistent anti-Brahmin feeling. Casteism was a force of no mean significance in the first general elections under the Republican Constitution, and manifested itself in such slogans as 'Reddis must solidly stand together', 'Irrespective of party considerations Reddis must vote for a Reddi candidate', or 'Non-Brahmins must unite to strike a blow to Brahmin domination'. As the interaction between the different castes in the wider political field is still in its initial stages, the pattern of group alignments has not emerged 578 very clearly. A third factor may also be mentioned here. Under ● 564 the influence of the social and political propaganda of the Sched- 185 uled Caste Federation, the untouchable castes have started voicing their grievances and protests against their position in the caste hierarchy. So far these protests have been mild and verbal only. Perceiving the economic advantages of the traditional system, the untouchables have not yet seriously challenged the assumptions that underlie the structure of the community. However, the abolition of untouchability by law, the granting of equal shares to them in all public utility services, and protests against the traditional system by the more vocal and assertive untouchables have aroused some tension with regard to them in the higher castes. 'Times are changing. The untouchables were admitted to schools first, then they started travelling with us in the same railway trains and buses; and now they want to draw water from our wells and eat with us in public eating-houses. The

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government is indulging them; and for vote-getting the political parties are spoiling them. If things go on like this, in the future these low castes will want to marry our daughters and sisters,' remarked a Reddi agriculturist. Those standing nearby nodded their assent. The above remark is illustrative of the general attitude of 'responsible' persons in the higher castes.

EDUCATED VERSUS UNEDUCATED

Adverse comments are frequently heard from the educated and uneducated people against each other. The uneducated especially have some stereotypes regarding the educated; and the latter often express derogatory opinions about the illiterate members of the community.

Remarks echoing the following opinions and sentiments are commonly heard from the uneducated people: 'What use is education to us? After four years at the school all that our children learn is to hold a pen in their hands. What we really want them to learn is the holding of the plough firmly.' 'By learning to read a couple of books at the school the youngsters begin to think that they have in their skulls all the knowledge and learning in the world. They scoff at their parents, belittle the experience of the elders, and seem to think no end of themselves. Realities of life soon teach them a lesson. Sooner or later they repent and fall at the feet of the elders.' 'Everyone says, "Send your children to school; uneducated people are like animals; education makes them human beings." But what do we get out of education? Boys learn to read and write, but they forget the traditional ways. They do not want to cultivate the family land, and are ashamed of their traditional profession. They all want jobs in the city. If things go on like this what will be the future of the community?' 'The educated people excel each other in tall talk and boasting. They will drink, gamble and intrigue. There is nothing else that they can do.' 'What service do the educated people render to the community? They instigate simple illiterate people to quarrel, and later exploit the situation to their own advantage.' 'We village people are simple. Education makes us crooked.' In substance the average attitude boils down to this: education shakes a person's belief in the traditional ways and creates in turn new desires and ambitions; these factors operating simultaneously make the educated persons misfits in the community.

On the other hand, the educated people think: 'The illiterate

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earlier in this chapter, suggests that an extrovert and sensitive people who cannot conceal their approval or disapproval and who do not suppress their immediate reactions cannot have a very peaceful and quiet life. Indeed most of the tensions are short-lived, but quarrels and conflicts are numerous and frequent. As the community is partially autonomous in several spheres of life, it is necessary for it to have an effective mechanism for the control of these conflicts.

Shamirpet, however, is only partially autonomous, for it is a part of a wider social system. The extent of caste organization is regional, and covers a very large number of villages. In several spheres of life it is the caste rather than the village that has the upper hand in controlling the behaviour of its constituents. Details of ritual connected with the life-cycle, and observance of the *mores* and norms of the caste fall in this category. Further the village is but a small unit in the national political structure of a sub-continent. Its laws are made by the State Legislature and the Union Parliament; and the law-enforcing arm of the State extends to it as effectively as it does to the rest of the country. This brings the State police and magistracy on the scene. All important breaches of law go to the civil and criminal courts. What remains of the autonomy of the village appears quite insignificant, but in actual practice relatively few cases go to caste councils, fewer to courts of law, and left to itself to control the inter-group and inter-personal relations of its members the machinery responsible for social control and justice within the village finds itself burdened with considerable work.

How is this mechanism set in motion? How does it work? Presently I shall give a few illustrative cases which will reveal the process in certain typical situations. At this stage it is necessary to point out that all cases of conflict do not go to the village council. In many cases the parties to the dispute boisterously quarrel over the issue and there the matter ends. For a few days they probably will not be on speaking terms, leave each other out of social functions and ceremonies, and continue to indulge in mutual recriminations and behind-the-back slander; but in course of time normal relations will be resumed. In other cases mediation or arbitration of the elders may be sought or may be volunteered by the elders themselves. When influential village elders notice disorderly or unbecoming behaviour on the part of someone

LIVING TOGETHER

Perhaps the fact of the matter was that Aliyabad men had obtained the favour by bribing the guards; but their excessive greed in not allowing any water into Shamirpet fields had exposed their game. Prompt official intervention checked ugly developments; and later the issue was resolved at inter-village level. But in the dispute itself the two villages had forgotten their internal differences and dissensions and each of them had acted as one body. Another instance of such concerted action and village unity is provided by the conflict between the residents of Shamirpet and eight army men from the nearby cantonment. These eight people came to the village in two army trucks and started loading their vehicles with firewood cut and stored by a resident of the village. Obviously the army men intended to take it away without payment. The owner of the house tried to check them, and in the process he was badly beaten up. In the meantime the news had reached the other village people, who came rushing to the spot armed with sticks. They did what they thought proper at the time to avenge the honour of the village. Outnumbered by the villagers, the army men returned to their camp, threatening to bring their company to destroy the entire village. Police intervened and the trouble was not allowed to develop further.

In a society resting on rigid division of the population into castes separated by strict rules governing touching, eating and drinking, sex relations and matrimony, and social distance prescribed by tradition it is essential that people realize certain limitations and accept certain conditions. Caste consciousness develops quite early in one's life and these limitations and conditions are absorbed long before maturity by all through conversation groups, play-groups and general social experience. So far there has been no attack on the general premises on which the society rests, and therefore no serious inter-group or inter-caste conflicts have arisen. The lower castes have accepted their inferior status, and while they have made efforts to improve their lot they have not openly revolted against it. In their turn the higher castes have also shown considerable adaptability, and recognizing the general social trend they have readjusted their attitudes and curbed some of the earlier excesses and injustices. They may still object to being touched by a low caste man, but they will not protest against his wearing superior clothing befitting only the upper castes.

178 The social structure of the village is basically the same
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THE CHANGING SCENE

although with every administrative or political change in the village there were several organizational changes. The primary unit in this structure is either the elementary family (maintaining close contacts with allied families) or it is a large joint family. The head of each family is known as the 'big man'. The next unit is the caste; or in the case of the Muslims, the group sharing a common religion. Each of these groups has a hereditary caste headman who represents it in the village council. Finally, this council consists of these headmen of the different castes, three Ganadi and the headman of the village who is its presiding officer. The following tables show the significant lines of variation in social organization, with special reference to family, caste and village council:

I—FAMILY

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Then	*Now*
(1) Insistence on family solidarity and cohesion.	(1) Growth of individualism.
(2) Greater attachment to the soil and settlement.	(2) Migrations more frequent.
(3) Intra-family relations governed by regard for age and kinship status.	(3) Less regard for these traditional principles.

II—CASTE

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Then	*Now*
(1) Occupational specialization on the basis of caste.	(1) Caste no longer the final and only determinant of occupation.
(2) Prohibition on inter-dining with some equal castes and all lower castes.	(2) Rules of inter-dining less rigid.
(3) Hierarchy and permanent distance between different castes.	(3) Mild protest against social hierarchy: some modification in actual practice.

III—VILLAGE COUNCIL

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Then	*Now*
(1) Constituted on hereditary principles.	(1) Also admits people with 'achieved status'.
(2) Little outside intervention.	(2) Considerable outside pressure.
(3) Decisions generally accepted.	(3) Defiance or avoidance possible.

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In the organization of the family the changed conditions and changing attitudes of the people have brought about some significant variations. It is difficult to present it statistically, but it could generally be said that in recent years the cohesion of the family has suffered on account of the growth of the spirit of individualism. Thereby family solidarity has been adversely affected. The people no longer have the same attachment for the soil of their settlement, and consequently mobility has increased. Among the younger people, especially among those who have had some education or urban contacts, the desire to go to the city is manifesting itself on an increasing scale. In making records of the biographies and general attitudes of the people, the contrast in the attitudes of the two steps of people emerged clearly. While the elderly and the middle-aged, mostly illiterate, complained about the inconveniences of village life, they still regarded it as the only way of life possible for *them*. On the other hand, the younger people seemed to idealize the city and its numerous attractions, and made no effort to conceal their contempt for the rustic ways of the village-folk. This change in attitudes and preferences has on the one hand encouraged migration to cities of young people who take up the small jobs there; and on the other it has generated disharmony and dissensions within the family causing considerable dislocation in the established principles according to which priorities and concessions went with age and kinship status. Service in the army, and city restaurants and the influence of the cinema tend to accentuate all this, but so far the number of young men with these tendencies is not more than 10% or 15% of the total in their age-group.

The caste system in the community presents only slight variations in some directions. As before, caste still retains its endogamous character. Similarly, caste continues to be a part of, and is sanctioned by, the traditional religion. However, its occupational character has undergone some change. People are now taking to new occupations. A goldsmith has opened a tea shop. Washermen and similar other castes are accepting menial jobs in the city. These are not their traditional occupations. Besides Muslims some non-Komti Hindus have set up general shops in the village; in the traditional system only Komtis could do so. Thus people are either giving up their traditional occupations, or they are taking to occupations which by tradition belong to some other castes.

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564 178 Prohibitions on inter-dining are still there; but they have been greatly relaxed. As a general rule people observe them within the village, but ignore them when they eat in the shops or restaurants in the city. The caste system is still characterized by its traditional hierarchy, but some ineffective verbal protests can now be heard against it. Among the castes on the lower level of the agriculturist group there has been some effort made at rising in the social scale by the adoption of surnames and caste appellations traditionally belonging to the higher groups. Although it has been legally abolished by the Constitution of the Republic of India, untouchability is still practised within the village. However, untouchable children can now attend the village school. Clean castes and unclean castes both ride in the same buses. No objection is taken if untouchables now dress like respectable people of the higher castes. As the colonies of the two untouchable castes are quite separate from the main village settlement and have their own wells, there has so far been no problem of their being able to draw water from the well used by the higher castes. Untouchables certainly resent their degraded status, but they are careful not to voice their protests too loudly or too publicly for they are conscious of the advantages of silence in view of their dependent position in the economic structure of the community.

178 623 Traditionally the membership of the village council is hereditary and should be inherited by the eldest male child on the death of the father. In the case of the inheritance of the office of village headman this principle has been strictly observed. Two Ganadis inherited their office from their fathers, but an additional post of Ganadi has been created in recent years to accommodate a young man who had considerable influence over his age-group and who was creating problems in the village. From among the heads of the different castes resident within the village, eight are at present ineffective, titular members, and are represented in its deliberations by some other more vocal and assertive members of the caste. Seven other rich and influential persons are also invited to participate in the proceedings. It is said that before the Jagir period there was very little outside pressure on the village council. In the Jagir period the estate officials tried to influence it indirectly. At present government officials residing within the village discreetly pull the strings and exert pressure on the council to secure favourable decisions in certain cases in which for some

623 562 for them as in the Bombay Village Panchayat Act. As such, few women came forward to contest in the Panchayat elections.

666 **Method of Election :** Method of election was by ballot in all the major Panchayats. Even in minor Panchayats, the elections were revealed to be by ballot as in Kapileswarapuram, Kothapeta, Avidi and by show of hands in Panchayats like Bodasakurru, Yeditha and Alamuru in East Godavari. But, in the majority of minor Panchayats, election was only by show of hands.

623 **Wards and Hamlets :** Representation of members by the several wards in the Panchayat and inclusion of several neighbouring hamlets in the Panchayat jurisdiction were revealed to be the universal features in all the Panchayats surveyed, irrespective of the grade to which they belonged. This revealed, the existence of a fair representative system of Panchayat membership from the several wards and hamlets.

● 564 **Caste Composition of the Panchayats :** It was revealed to be predominantly Non-Brahmins, in every district and in every grade.

Casual Vacant Seats : Casual vacancies arising in the major or minor Panchayats were generally intimated to the District Panchayat Officer, who on receipt of information went to conduct fresh elections for the seats. But, during the course of the survey some instances came to light, where such intimations were not duly given to the District Panchayat Officer and where consequetly no fresh elections were held.

One Village-One Panchayat : This was the basis which was usually followed, but, there were also instances where joint Panchayats were found to be working well as in East Godavari and Kistna.

Supersession versus Nomination of Panchayat : Election versus nomination of the members of the Panchayats was a controversy that held the ground for a very long time in the discussions of the reform of Local Self-Government in Madras. Even in the Madras Panchayats Bill of 1941, it was contended that a nominated Panchayat was better than an elected one to eliminate friction, where there were contending parties in a village. The period of such bodies to be in power was from 1 to 3 years. This was a time when the Panchayat had to be dissolved for mal-administration and when a special officer had to be appointed for the purpose of carrying on the administration of the village. In practice, Panchayats when they proved unworkable were only superseded. They were not run by nominated members.

312 3 from the Village Panchayat and one from the Panchayatdars. Again in Kampli in Bellary and in Brahmanayeleru in Anantapur, the President of the Panchayat as well as that of the Irrigation Panchayat were the same without any detriment to the good work of either body.

[666] **Method of Election**: This was generally by show of hands and the election was always conducted by the Revenue Divisional Officer.

Term: The term of office for the members of the Irrigation Panchayat was 3 years, but for the last 13 years, there were no elections due to war and the same old bodies were in power.

[564] **Caste Composition**: The majority was always of non-Brahmins, more than of Brahmins. There was no system of reservation of seats or ex-officio membership as in the case of the Village Panchayats.

651 312 **B. Finance**: This was constisted of meagre Government grants supplemented in a few cases by the small proceeds from sale of grass, etc. The Government of Madras had made the following sanctions to the Irrigation Panchayats:

1.	Kovvada Channel	... Rs.	30-0-0
2.	Yendaganda Channel	... „	30-0-0
3.	Aya Bhimavaram Channel I.	... „	60-0-0
4.	„ „ Channel II.	... „	60-0-0
5.	Bhaskararao Channel	... „	20-0-0
6.	Cherukumilli Channel	... „	20-0-0
7.	Kampli Irrigation Panchayat in Bellary		nil.

As regards the income of the Irrigation Panchayats, they did not have any other sources than the grants of the Revenue Department annually as mentioned above; and these were inadequate. Besides these, the Panchayats got some income from the sale of grass on canal bunds, whenever that source was available, but this was possible only in the Circars and not in the Ceded Districts. The actual expenditure was generally in excess of finance and the gap was usually filled in by subscriptions voluntary and methodical. Brahmanayeleru Irrigation Panchayat in Anantpur collected at the rate of Re. 1/- per acre on wet cultivation and as. 4 per acre on dry cultivation in its area.

312 652 **C. Functions**: The income of the Irrigation Panchayats was inadequate to meet the cost of their functions which were generally the same as Bhimavaram and Cherukumilli Irrigation Panchayats, Details of expenditure for these were as below.

PART II

Actual Conditions Revealed by the Survey :

A. Structure : Selection of the sample of the Forest Panchayats was made on the same basis as that of the Village Panchayats in four categories i.e. good, moderate, unsatisfactorily and very unsatisfactorily working according to the connotation explained in the preface. (Table No. 22) 311

The Forest Panchayats were not constituted on one village one Panchayat basis, but they were constituted for a group of villages. Sometimes the Forest Panchayat was for 7 to 8 village hamlets e. g. Bayyavaram in Vizagapatam District, so with almost all the Forest Panchayats in every district.

The membership varied with the number of hamlets to be represented on the Panchayat. If number of hamlets was less and the area of the Forest Panchayat was meagre, naturally, the number of members of the Forest Panchayat was less.

The caste composition was usually cosmopolitan, i. e. 4 were Valamas, 4 were Kapus and one was Raju in Bayyavaram which was typical example. The other Forest Panchayats in other districts revealed a representation of all castes. [564]

The method of election was always by show of hands. The electorate consisted of the cattle owners. [641] [666]

There was no ex-officio membership of the Village Officials.

The ability of the Forest Panchayat and its working depended mostly on the team work of the members and their sense of responsibility, not to speak of the resources at their disposal.

B. Finance : Generally the income of the Forest Panchayats was constituted of the proceeds of the grazing fee, the sale of dead wood, fuel and quarry's stone, income from minor forest produce, bark, leaves, Tangedu, Avaram, etc. Income from sandalwood trees was generally taken by the Forest Department of the Government. Similarly income from big fuel coups was also taken away by the Government except an insufficient share given to the Forest Panchayats for meeting the cost of cutting the wood. (Table No. 23). 311 651

The grazing permits of the Forest Panchayats were usually determined according to the extent of the acreage under command of the Panchayat. The incidence per cow came usually to 3 acres. But the rate of the grazing permits varied from one Panchayat to another Forest

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CHITTOOR DISTRICT.

THETTUPALLI.

[*By E. Krishnamurthi, Christian College, Madras.*]

361 133 *Preliminary.*—Thettupalli, belonging to the Punganūr Zamindari in the Chittoor district, is situated in a valley, surrounded by some rocky, and some gently sloping hills on three sides within a radius of 1½ miles, and on the north by hills more distant. The hills are not cultivated. Some have grass, some scrub jungle, some thick forest, about ten miles away there is dense jungle with tigers. It is on the same level as the Mysore plateau, about 2,000 feet above sea-level.

162 The total population of the caste village is 149—men 43, women 43, children 63 (36 males, 27 females).

[564] Castes 11.—Brahman, Komati (Vaisya), Kapu (cultivators), Balija (cultivators), Dhoby, Karamala (Blacksmith), Boya (cultivating low caste), Yekili (low caste Muhammadan), Kummara (Potter), Muhammadan, Dommara. The Dommaras are travelling pedlars who also cultivate and manufacture country carts.

Caste.		Brahman.	Komati.	Kapu.	Balija.	Dhoby.	Karamala.	Boyas.	Yekili.	Kummara.	Muhammadans.	Dommara.
Number of families		2	2	4	4	2	1	8	1	1	2	2
Individuals ...	Males.	1	2	6	4	4	1	13	1	2	3	4
	Females	2	1	4	7	4	3	11	2	2	2	4
	Children under 12.	3	5	8	6	9	1	12	4	3	7	4
	Total ...	6	8	18	17	17	5	36	7	7	12	12
Children living under 12 ...		3	5	8	6	9	1	12	4	3	7	4
Dead		...	...	2	6*	4	...	8	2	...	4	3

* All the six belong to one family. Seven were born, of whom 6 died and the remaining one is a baby 3 months old.

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Telugu AW17

MYSORE.

GOWNIPALLE.

[*By E. Krishnamurti, Christian College, Madras.*]

361 *Preliminary.*—Gownipalle, Srinivaspur taluk, Kolar district, Mysore, is situated in a low marshy district.

133 It has no forests or even jungle—only thick under-growth. No big rivers—only a stream about a furlong from the outskirts of the village. No hills near by. But about nine miles off there is a very big hill clothed with forest and abounding in good game.

162 *Population.*—Total population of caste village 417—men 119, women 133, boys 77, girls 88; homesteads 116.

[54] *Castes.*—Brahman, Komati (traders), Dhobis, Kammala (blacksmith), Bōya and Yekili (agricultural labourers), Kummara (potters), Muhammadan, Barber, Besta (labourers), Edigi-Gandla (oil-mongers), Sāthāni (non-Brahman temple servants).

Number of families and individuals in each caste—

Caste.	Brahmans.	Komati.	Dhobi.	Bōya.	Yekili.	Kommara.	Barbers.	Besta.	Kammara.	Edigi-Gandla.	Sāthāni.	Muhammadans.
Number of families.	11	..	..	14	1	1	..	6	1	1	2	30
Males ...	16	6	6	10	..	1	..	6	1	1	2	44
Females ...	24	10	6	13	1	2	7	6	1	3	1	45
Children. { Boys ...	13	6	2	9	..	3	3	8	1	3	1	23
Children. { Girls ...	15	7	4	8	..	1	4	7	2	2	3	25
Total ...	68	29	18	40	1	7	22	27	5	9	6	137

Paracheri—Population.—Total 126—men 41, women 40, boys 20, girls 25. Number of families 31.

Statistics of births and deaths—

Year.	Population.				Total.	Births.	Deaths.				Total.
	Men.	Women.	Boys.	Girls.			Adult males.	Adult females.	Children. Males.	Children. Females.	
1912	212	210	125	122	669	22	2	5	4	1	11
1913	192	201	111	120	624	24	25	12	6	6	50
1914	180	193	107	106	586	14	10	6	3	3	22
1915	180	174	97	113	544	26	2	2	4	1	9